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REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON INT. IMPROVEMENTS

ON THE

CAPE FEAR AND DEEP RIVER
NAVIGATION COMPANY.

RALEIGH :

W. W. HOLDEN, PRINTER TO THE STATE.

1855.

REPORT

The Committee on Internal Improvements, to whom was referred the "Bill to authorize the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company, to issue bonds and for other purposes," have had the same under consideration and have instructed me to report the same back to the Senate, with the accompanying amendment, and recommend its passage, and also to assign briefly the considerations that have brought the Committee to this conclusion.

In order that the views of the Committee may be fully appreciated, it is proper, in the first place, to shew the present condition of the improvement, and what remains to be done.

The work that has already been done, consists of seventeen Locks and fourteen Dams. According to the plan of Mr. Douglass, the distinguished and able Engineer, who has recently examined the Cape Fear and Deep Rivers, the number of Dams necessary will be seventeen, and the number of Locks will be twenty-two; thus it appears the number of Dams yet to be constructed is three, and the number of Locks is six. A Canal over a mile in length, is to be cut at Pullen's Falls, and the Canal at Buck-Horn, five-eighths of a mile in length, is to be widened and deepened.

But in order to make this improvement permanent and available at all times, Mr. Douglass proposes to add much to the Locks and Dams already constructed, so as to make them durable; and his plan is to widen the bases of the Dams, and to strengthen the walls of Locks; and from the concurrent testimony of Messrs. Wm. McLane and

D. G. McDuffie, (who were examined by the Committee very thoroughly, touching the entire work, and who have been heretofore employed in the capacity of assisting Engineers of the Company,) this extra work is necessary, and if done in pursuance of the plan of Mr. Douglass, will make the improvement answer the purpose for which it was designed.

Your Committee feel warranted in placing great confidence in the plans and estimates of Mr. Douglass, as it has been proved to their entire satisfaction, that he has been eminently successful in *all* the slack-water improvements that he has projected and had the control of, and that he is as remarkable for the accuracy of his estimates as for his skill and fidelity in the construction of the works that have been committed to him; and they, therefore, feel justified in expressing the belief, that his estimates for the completion of this work are ample, that no apprehension need be felt on the part of the General Assembly, as to any further failure or disappointment for the want of means, and that, by carrying out his plans, this improvement will realize all that is claimed for it by its most sanguine friends.

Under these circumstances, your Committee feel that they would fail of their duty, did they not urge upon the Legislature the speedy passage of the Bill upon your table, to grant whatever is necessary, and to grant that promptly—as delay might prove of great loss to the State and the individual stockholders.

It is deemed appropriate to state, as evidence of Mr. Douglass' skill and success as a slack-water Engineer, that it has been shown by a gentleman very familiar with that work, that the Lehigh Canal (the most difficult part of which was constructed by Mr. Douglass,) was a work in every respect infinitely more difficult of execution than our proposed improvement; that in about twenty-six miles a fall of 600 feet had to be overcome, while on

the Cape Fear and Deep Rivers there is only a fall of not quite 200 feet in 100 miles; that the highest dam on that work is 36 feet, while the highest on this is only about 18 feet; and yet that the works of the Lehigh Navigation have resisted successfully not only the heaviest freshets, but also the attacks of immense masses of ice four months in every year, and that the foundation for the works is not as good there as in our works. Your committee next propose to invite attention to the

Practicability of the Work.

It will be conceded that this depends upon two main causes: 1st. *The permanency of the works*; and secondly, *the supply of water*.

As regards the 1st, *the permanency of the works*, the parallel already run between the foundations for our works and those on the Lehigh Canal, and the durability of the latter under severer trials than our improvement will be subjected to, would seem to establish the fact that the same skill applied here will be equally successful; and when to this is added the fact, which cannot be disputed, that under the most unfavorable circumstances, the works already constructed on these rivers have stood, in a most remarkable manner, the heaviest freshets known during the present century; we hazard nothing in saying that there is no doubt that the works may be made permanent.

Secondly. *As regards the supply of water.* In this also we have a great advantage over the Lehigh Navigation. Mr. McLane, who is intimately acquainted with this work, stated before us that Governor's Creek, a small tributary of Deep River, affords more water than the head streams of the Lehigh; and he and Mr. McDuffie both state, after a very minute acquaintance with our rivers, that there is not the slightest doubt on this point, that even now, during this unprecedented drought, there

is an abundance of water wherever the works have been constructed, and that there is at present good navigation from Jones' Falls, eight miles above Fayetteville, to Haywood, in Chatham county, a distance of over seventy miles. We are also informed by Mr. McDuffie, that prior to this improvement, nothing was ever carried to market at all down the upper Cape Fear through Smiley's Falls, except in heavy freshets, and then at great risk of human life, and that now boats, rafts, &c., may pass in the dryest season; and that some weeks since, about 1,500,000 feet of timber passed these falls, from about forty miles above Fayetteville, through the lowest lock in the river, and that the navigation is good from that point to Haywood.

We think these facts show conclusively that the opinion of Mr. Douglass is well founded, that we need never have any apprehension about the supply of water; that it will be ample for the most extended operations.

A very important inquiry suggests itself, and that is as to the

Indemnity to the State,

for her endorsement of the bonds of the Company, as proposed by the bill. This will depend upon the capacity of the work and the resources of the country through which it passes. In the first place it penetrates a valuable and extensive pine forest, from which large quantities of naval stores, timber and lumber will be carried to market, as well as great quantities of staves, as it touches a region very abundant with white oak. But the great source of revenue will be the transportation of coal, which your committee feel assured exists in large quantities on and near the banks of the Deep River. This, we think, has not only been established by the examinations of the first Geologists of the country, but by actual experiment. Mr. McLane, Mining Engineer of a portion of the coal fields, gave the committee a minute and

very interesting account of the Deep River Coal field, and stated that he had again and again examined it in company with Professors Johnson, Emmons, Jackson and C. W. Shephard, and has, during a large portion of the last three years, been engaged in these explorations, in boring, digging coal, &c., and gave it as his decided opinion that the coal field is immensely extensive, and far more so than was originally supposed, and that all his examinations go to prove it more and more extensive—that there are, in his opinion, at least *nine hundred millions tons of coal in these fields*, and that it is the best coal in the world for gas. Mr. McLane also stated that his company have expended on Deep River at least \$140,000 in land, machinery, &c., and that he will commence getting out coal for market by March next, provided there is assurance that the river improvement will be completed—that he has made arrangements for getting out 350,000 tons the first year, and that other companies will also get out large quantities, one of which is ready at any moment to commence shipping, so soon as the river is open to navigation, and that there will be shipped per annum at least from 400,000 to 500,000 tons.

Taking these things to be so, and your committee have no reason to doubt them, there can certainly be no risk in endorsing the bonds by the State; for, supposing one-half the coal estimated goes to market, for the next five years, this, at a toll of twenty-five cents per ton, would yield an annual revenue of \$50,000, sufficient to pay the current expenses, the interest on these bonds as they fall due, and leave more than a sufficiency to be set apart as a sinking fund to pay the principal.

There is another important matter, to which your committee invite attention. It appears from the reports of the distinguished Professors referred to, and from testimony before us, that there is an inexhaustible supply of the very finest *iron ore* near Deep River, and in imme-

diate proximity with the coal, and we are assured by an experienced and practical miner that railroad iron may be made on Deep River cheaper than at any other point elsewhere, and we are farther assured that a company will be established for the manufacture of iron, so soon as the completion of the river improvement is made certain by the passage of this bill on your table, and that two extensive manufacturers of iron, one residing in Petersburg, Va., and the other in Pottsville, Pa., have examined this iron and have actually subscribed \$10,000 of the capital of the proposed company.

In consideration of these things, your Committee felt bound to make a more detailed report than usual, with a view of bringing these important facts before the Legislature, and they feel that they cannot too strongly urge it to grant every necessary aid calculated to complete the greatest State work ever projected by North Carolina, especially when we compare its costs with its resources.

We cannot omit to mention, that from testimony before us, that a fatal blow will be given to these vast resources, should the Bill now before us, or some other suitable measure of relief, be rejected by the present General Assembly, for we are assured by Mr. McLane, that he is under express orders from his employers, to remove the force and machinery of every kind, under his charge, now on Deep River, and to abandon the coal field, if the Legislature refuse to grant the necessary relief, inasmuch as water transportation is so much cheaper and more desirable for coal than Railroads, and because no one Railroad, nor any number that are likely to be built, will be competent to carry off the coal that is expected to be taken out, and further, that another company, now ready to commence shipping coal, has suspended operations, until further aid is granted the River.

Finally, your Committee hope that these facts will satisfy the Legislature of the importance of prompt and effi-

cient relief, in the passage of the bill on your table, and thus render a public benefit, and also save the money appropriated by the State and individuals and make it a profitable investment.

The committee propose the following amendment to the first section of the bill.

Strike out all after the words "to wit:" in the 15th line of said section, and insert as follows: "\$100,000 on the first day of January, 1865, \$100,000 on the first day of January, 1875, \$100,000 on the first day of January, 1885.

CHAS. F. FISHER, *Chairman.*